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ABSTRACT

A study of middle verb constructions in Canadian French and Madrid Spanish suggests that two alleged defining characteristics of these constructions are not really defining characteristics. These are: (1) that the constructions only appear in generic sentences, and (2) that they disallow "by"-phrases of the type found in passive sentences. It is argued that the French spoken in eastern Canada and the Spanish spoken in Madrid undermine both of these assumptions. Based on data from those varieties and five additional considerations, it is concluded that Romance middle constructions are associated with a structure similar, but not identical, to one in which there is a "pro" internal to the verb phrase that bears the external theta-role. This account is shown to accommodate not only the full range of micro-parametric variation but also offer an explanation for the generic constraint at work in most dialects of Romance languages. Contains 39 references. (MSE)

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Micro-Parametric Variation in Romance Middle Constructions

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Abstract

This paper introduces novel micro-parametric data drawn from Canadian French and Madrid Spanish middle constructions which indicate that two alleged defining characteristics of this construction are not really defining characteristics of it at all. In particular, it is presently assumed that Romance middles must be generic and that they disallow by-phrases of the type found in passive sentences, yet these dialects of Romance counterexemplify both claims. Based on these data, as well as five additional considerations, it is argued that Romance middles are associated with a structure similar, although not identical, to the one proposed in Roberts (1987), namely, one in which there is a pro internal to VP which bears the external theta-role. This account is shown to not only accommodate the full range of micro-parametric variation but to also offer an explanation for the generic constraint at work in most dialects of Romance.

0. *A Re-Examination of Two Defining Characteristics of the Romance Middle*

The Romance middle construction has enjoyed a great deal of attention from the very inception of the generative framework. (See Gross 1968, Obenauer 1970, Ruwet 1972, Rizzi 1976, Burzio 1981, Chomsky 1981, Williams 1981, Belletti 1982, Zubizarreta 1982, Keyser and Roeper 1984, Roberts 1985, Burzio 1986, Wehrli 1986, Roberts 1987, Zubizarreta 1987, Cinque 1988, Fellbaum and Zribi-Hertz 1989, Lyons 1989, among others for discussion.) From this rich tradition, a great deal of consensus has emerged regarding its defining characteristics. Two of them are the appearance of the overt morpheme SE/SI and the placement of the thematic object in surface subject position. These have been illustrated in the following French, Italian, and Spanish examples:

(1) a. Ces sakés japonais se boivent frais en été.

these sakes Japanese SE drink cold in summer

"These Japanese sakes are supposed to be drunk cold in the summer."

b. Questi sakè giapponesi si bevono freddi d'estate.

these sakes Japanese SI drink cold of summer

"These Japanese sakes are supposed to be drunk cold in the summer."

c. Esos sakes japoneses se beben frescos.

those sakes Japanese SE drink cold

"Those Japanese sakes are supposed to be drunk cold."

It is also presently assumed that a third defining characteristic of middle verbs is that they can only appear in generic sentences, that is, sentences which describe a state of affairs that used to be attributable, is attributable, or at some future time will be attributable to any potential individual or set of individuals. This constraint has been illustrated in the Continental French examples given below in (2a,b) which differ from one another with respect to the presence or absence of a punctual adverb and the use or non-use of a generic tense.[1]

(2) a. Ces sakés japonais se boivent frais en été.

these sakes Japanese SE drink-PL cold in summer

"These Japanese sakes are supposed to be drunk cold in the summer."

b. *Hier à huit heures, ces sakés japonais se sont bus frais.

yesterday at eight hours these sakes Japanese SE are drunk cold

"Yesterday at eight o'clock, these Japanese sakes were drunk cold."

Finally, middle verbs are also assumed to disallow by-phrases of the type found in passive sentences, as demonstrated below in (3a,c) which reflect the judgments reported in the vast majority of the literature on this topic. (See, for example, Ruwet 1972:110, Belletti 1982:7, and Aissen and Perlmutter 1983:368.) This assumption regarding by-phrases has, however, been slightly qualified. In particular, Continental French middles apparently

could co-occur with a by-phrase at earlier stages of the language (cf. Martinon 1927, Stéfanini 1962, Ruwet 1972, among others). Also, Cinque (1988:529, ft.11), citing Lepschy (1986: ft.4), reports the existence of a number of such examples in more rhetorical styles of Italian. Nonetheless it is accurate to say that linguists currently assume that spoken styles of the modern Romance languages disallow by-phrases in middle constructions.

(3) a. *Ces sakés japonais se boivent frais par les gens.
these sakes Japanese SE drink cold by the people
"People are supposed to drink these Japanese sakes cold."

b. *Questi sakè giapponesi si bevono freddi dalla gente.
these sakes Japanese SI drink cold by-the people
"People are supposed to drink these Japanese sakes cold."

c. *Esos sakes japoneses se beben frescos por los estudiantes.
those sakes Japanese SE drink cold by the students
"Students drink those Japanese sakes cold."

What has remained unnoticed until the present is the existence of dialects of the Romance languages which undermine both of the latter two assumptions. There are speakers of French in Eastern Canada who not only productively allow middles with by-phrases, as in (4) below, but also non-generic middles, provided that such a by-phrase is present, as in (5).[2]

(4) a. En général, ces débats s'enregistrent par Anne, qui est notre technicienne la plus qualifiée.
in general these debates SE record by Anne who is our technician the most qualified
"Generally, these debates are recorded by Anne, who is our most qualified technician."

(4) b. Ce costume traditionnel se porte surtout par les femmes.

(heard on TV in 1993)

this garment traditional SE wears mostly by the women

"This traditional garment is worn mostly by women."

(5) a. Hier, des rubans noirs se sont portés *(par les étudiantes).

yesterday some ribbons black SE are worn by the students

"Yesterday, black ribbons were worn by the students."

b. Ces promesses se sont faites *(par au moins deux politiciens).

these promises SE are made by at least two politicians

"These promises were made by at least two politicians."

Furthermore, our Spanish informant, María-Luisa Rivero, reports similar judgments for her variety of Spanish, which is spoken in Madrid: these speakers not only allow by-phrases with middles, as in (6a,b), but they also accept non-generic middles, as (6b) also demonstrates.

(6) a. Eso se dice (por los militares).

this SE says by the soldiers

"Such things are often said (by soldiers)."

b. Esas promesas se hicieron (por Ana).

these promises SE made by Ana

"These promises were made (by Ana)."

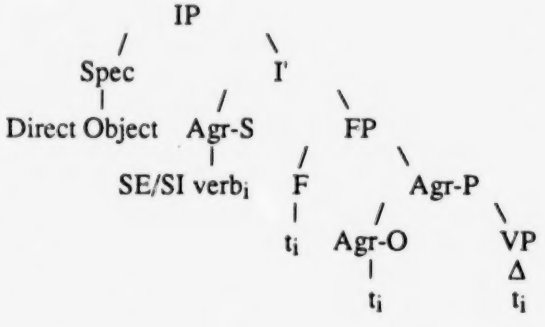
In this paper, we will show that these data provide the key to understanding the aspectual (generic) constraint at work in most dialects of the Romance languages.[3] Furthermore, a micro-parametric account of the full range of Romance middle data will be developed on the basis of these data, as well as some additional facts to be introduced momentarily. In essence, we will be arguing that these constructions contain a syntactically active external argument which is realized as a pro internal to VP (as Roberts 1987 has suggested); minor

c-selection differences will be used to account for the range of variation attested regarding by-phrases and non-generic middles.

1. *Background: The Two Basic Syntactic Approaches to the Romance Middle*

Two basic positions have been taken with respect to the syntactic status of the understood agent in Romance middle constructions. According to the first type of approach, advocated by Williams (1981:94,106), Wehrli (1986:274), Cinque (1988: 561, 565), and Fellbaum & Zribi-Hertz (1989:17), middle constructions do not contain a syntactically active external argument. That is, these authors have taken the position that middle SE/SI prevents the external theta-role from being represented in the syntax, either by deleting it (Cinque and Wehrli) or by simply blocking its projection from the lexicon (Fellbaum & Zribi-Hertz and Williams). According to this type of syntactically inactive external argument approach, the middle verb is a one-place predicate which projects its internal argument either in the surface subject position (Williams' view) or in "normal" object position with movement to surface subject position at S-Structure (Cinque, Fellbaum and Zribi-Hertz, and Wehrli's position). Both variants of this type of approach have been illustrated below:

(7) a. Williams' (1981:94,106) syntactically inactive external argument approach:



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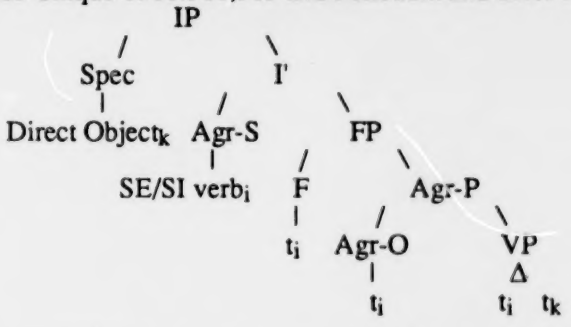
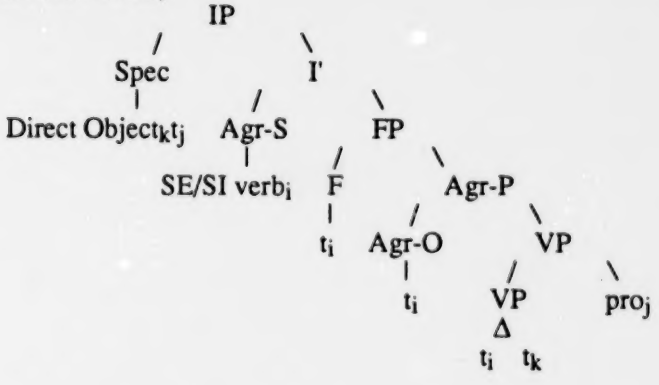
(7) b. Wehrli's (1986:274) syntactically inactive external argument approach:
(See also Cinque 1988:561,565 and Fellbaum and Zribi-Hertz 1989:17.)

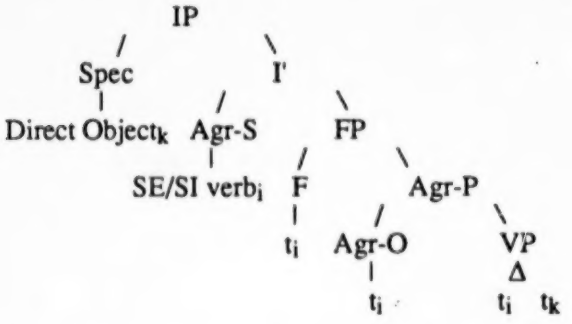


In contrast, Belletti (1980,1982:5), Chomsky (1981:270-271), Keyser & Roeper (1984:406), Roberts (1987:273-277), and Lyons (1989:172), elaborating on earlier insights by Gross (1968), Ruwet (1972), and Zubizarreta (1982), among others, propose an analysis of Romance middles whereby the external argument is syntactically represented, either as an explicit argument (Belletti and Roberts) or as an implicit argument identical in nature to the passive morpheme (Chomsky, Keyser and Roeper, and Lyons). Both variants of the syntactically active external argument approach follow:

(8) a. Roberts' (1987:273-277) syntactically active external argument approach:
(Partially inspired by Gross 1968, Ruwet 1972, Belletti 1980,1982:5, and Zubizarreta 1982.)



(8) b. Chomsky's (1981:270-271) Syntactically Active External Argument Approach:
(See also Keyser & Roeper 1984:406 and Lyons 1989:172.)



In sections 3 and 4 we will be presenting five arguments in favor of a slightly modified view of Roberts' structure, given above in (8a). Before doing so, however, we will first require a second piece of background information.

2. *Background: Four Tests for a Syntactically Active External Argument*

As the last section made clear, syntacticians have come to two separate conclusions regarding the syntactic status of the understood agent in Romance middle constructions. Certain authors have suggested that this argument is syntactically active; others that it is not. Fortunately, independent research on two different constructions, namely, English passive and neuter/ergative sentences, has led to the development of four tests whose function is to distinguish between syntactically inactive and syntactically active external arguments. In particular, Chomsky (1981:143,ft.60) cites Manzini (1980) for the original observation that only syntactically active external arguments can Control into Rationale Clauses, a contrast which has also been discussed in Chomsky (1986:119), Jaeggli (1986a:611), and Roberts (1987:70). In addition, Chomsky (1986:118), Jaeggli (1986a:611), and Roberts (1987:70) have argued that only syntactically active external arguments allow Agent-oriented adverbs. Thirdly, Chomsky (1986:118) and Jaeggli (1986a:611) suggest that only active external arguments permit optional by-phrases. And, finally, Stroik (1992:132, ft.7) has shown that only syntactically active external arguments

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can function as objects of predication.[4] To briefly summarize how each of these four tests function, consider first the French sentences in (9a) and (9b), which involve Rationale Clauses in French passive and neuter/ergative constructions respectively.

(9) a. Les porte-avions de l'ennemi ont été coulés pour PRO
mettre fin à une longue bataille navale.
the carry-planes of the enemy have been sunk for
to-put end to a long battle naval
"The enemy aircraft carriers were sunk in order to put an end to a long naval battle."

b. *Les porte-avions de l'ennemi ont coulé pour PRO
mettre fin à une longue bataille navale.
the carry-planes of the enemy have sank for
to-put end to a long battle naval
*"The enemy aircraft carriers sank in order to put an end to a long naval battle."

As the contrast in grammaticality between the French passive sentence in (9a) and the French neuter/ergative structure in (9b) demonstrates, only sentences which contain a syntactically active external argument can control into Rationale clauses. Before turning to the next test, it is rather interesting to note that it is not possible to illustrate the functioning of the Rationale Clause test (or, in fact, any of the other three tests) using the Italian and Spanish counterparts of English and French "neuter/ergative" verbs like to melt or to sink. Consider in this respect the Italian and Spanish counterparts to the French examples in (9a,b) above, given below in (10a,b) and (11a,b) respectively.

(10) a. Le portaerei nemiche sono state affondate per mettere fine alla lunga battaglia navale.

the carry-planes enemy are been sunk for to-put end to-the long battle naval

"The enemy aircraft carriers were sunk in order to put an end to a long naval battle."

b. Le portaerei nemiche sono affondate per mettere fine alla lunga battaglia navale.

the carry-planes enemy are sunk for to-put end to-the long battle naval

"The enemy aircraft carriers have been sunk in order to put an end to a long naval battle."

(11) a. Los portaviones del enemigo fueron hundidos para poner fin a una larga batalla naval.

the carry-planes of-the enemy were sunk for to-put end to a long battle naval

"The enemy aircraft carriers were sunk in order to put an end to a long naval battle."

b. Los portaviones del enemigo se hundieron para poner fin a una larga batalla naval.

the carry-planes of-the enemy SE sank for to-put end to a long battle naval

"The enemy aircraft carriers were sunk in order to put an end to a long naval battle."

As the grammaticality contrast between the French example in (9b) and its Italian and Spanish counterparts in (10b) and (11b) demonstrate, verbs like couler "to sink" or fondre "to melt" are not syntactically equivalent across the Romance languages, as one might

initially expect. In particular, these verbs only lack a syntactically active external argument in French and English since only in these languages are Rationale Clauses unacceptable. This difference may be related to the fact that only in English and French are these verbs conjugated with the verb avoir "to have": in the case of Italian, these verbs are always conjugated with the verb essere "to be", and, in the case of Spanish, they can only appear in middle structures. This is not to say, however, that there are no truly "neuter" or "ergative" verbs in Italian and Spanish. We are only noting that the membership of this class is not identical across the Romance languages. For example, we have been able to find one Spanish verb which does behave in a manner parallel to English and French verbs like couler "to sink" and fondre "to melt", namely the verb hervir "to boil" which (as expected) exhibits contrasts like those in (9a,b) above, namely, El agua fue hervida para PRO quitar olores. "The water was boiled PRO to kill the odor." versus *El agua ha hervido para PRO quitar olores. *"The water boiled PRO to kill the odor." While we have not been able to find such a verb in Italian, we would not be surprised to learn that such a verb does exist.

The Agent-oriented adverb test functions in a fashion parallel to the Rationale Clause test. In particular, the contrast between the French examples in (12a) and (12b) below shows that only syntactically active arguments can co-occur with Agent-Oriented adverbs like intentionally, carefully, and deliberately. That is, the passive morpheme in (12a) can co-occur with such adverbs - the neuter or ergative construction in (12b) disallows them.

(12) a. Les policiers sont convaincus que ces pièces d'or ont été fondues intentionnellement.

the police are convinced that these coins of gold have been melted intentionally

"The police are convinced that these gold coins were intentionally melted down."

(12) b. *Ces pièces d'or ont fondu intentionnellement.

these coins of gold have melted intentionally

*"These gold coins intentionally melted."

Likewise, the contrast between the (a) and (b) examples in (13) demonstrates that only syntactically active external arguments can function as objects of predication.

(13) a. ?Cette machine à bouillir le linge est automatique. Maintenant le linge peut être bouilli tout en lisant.

this machine of to-boil the laundry is automatic now the laundry can to-be boiled all in reading

"This washer for sterilizing laundry is automatic. Now laundry can be boiled while you're reading."

b. Cette machine à bouillir le linge est automatique. *Maintenant le linge bout tout en lisant.

this machine of to-boil the laundry is automatic now the laundry boils all in reading

"This washer for sterilizing laundry is automatic. *Now laundry boils while reading."

Finally, the contrast between the (a) and (b) examples in (14) shows that only constructions containing active external arguments ever allow overt by-phrases.

(14) a. Ces pièces d'or ont été fondues par les voleurs.

these coins of gold have been melted by the thieves

"These gold coins were melted down by the thieves."

b. *Ces pièces d'or ont fondu par les voleurs.

these coins of gold have melted by the thieves

"These gold coins melted down by the thieves."

Having briefly reviewed the four tests for a syntactically active external argument, we can now apply these tests to the Romance middle construction since our goal is to determine which of the two approaches illustrated in (7) and (8) is the correct one.

3. *Application of the Four Tests to Romance Middles*

To establish that Romance middles contain a syntactically active external argument, Roberts (1987:275) has applied the Rationale Clause test and Agent-Oriented adverb test to tensed middle verbs and he has obtained results which initially seem to indicate that there is indeed some sort of external argument present in the syntax. The relevant data are given below. Furthermore, we have constructed the sentences in (15c), (16c) and (17c) which show that the third criterion is also met in these tensed contexts.

(15) a. Une usine, ça se brûle pour toucher l'assurance. (Zubizarreta 1982)
a factory it SE burns for to-collect the insurance
"Factories, they can be burned down to collect the insurance."

b. Les contrats de location, ça se lit attentivement.
the contracts of rental it SE reads carefully
"Rental contracts must be read carefully."

c. Ce musée militaire ne se visite qu' en uniforme.
this museum military NEG SE visits only in uniform
"This military museum can only be visited by people in uniform."

(16) a. Le mele si mangiano per perdere peso.
the apples SI eat to to-lose weight
"Apples are eaten to lose weight."

b. I bambini si lavano volentieri. (Roberts 1987:275)
the children SI wash willingly
"Children are washed willingly."

(16) c. Questi musei militari non si visitano che in divisa.

these museums military NEG SI visit only in uniform

"These military museums can only be visited by people in uniform."

(17) a. Una fábrica, eso se incendia para cobrar el seguro.

a factory it SE burns to to-collect the insurance

"A factory can be burned down to collect the insurance."

b. Los contratos, eso se lee con cuidado.

the contracts this SE reads with care

"A contract, it must be read carefully."

c. Estos museos militares no se visitan más que de uniforme.

these museums military NEG SE visit more than of uniform

"These military museums can only be visited by people in uniform."

Cinque (1988: sections 4.1 and 4.2) has argued that these results are not conclusive since one could (as he does) attribute their grammaticality to an impersonal argument use of the SE/SI morpheme. To rule out this possibility, Cinque suggests that one must use infinitival clauses since these lack the Nominative Case feature impersonal SE/SI requires. Although Cinque (1988:562) has suggested that middle SE/SI fails the three tests in this environment, we have been able to construct sentences in French, Spanish, and Italian which show that this is not entirely correct.

(18) a. Vu que ces manifestants sont aussi méprisés qu'ils sont mal armés, ils auront l'avantage de pouvoir se disperser pour PRO satisfaire un électorat avide d'ordre et de sécurité.

seen that these demonstrators are as despised as they are poorly armed they will-have the advantage of to-be-able SE to-disperse for to-satisfy an electorate eager for order and for security

"Given that these demonstrators are as hated as they are poorly armed, they'll have the advantage of being able to be dispersed so as to satisfy an electorate that is eager for order and security."

b. Les contrats rédigés par M. Leblanc ont la réputation de devoir se lire avec précaution.

the contracts drawn-up by Mr. Leblanc have the reputation of to-have-to SE to-read with care

"Contracts drawn up by Mr. Leblanc have the reputation of having to be read carefully."

c. Ces musées militaires ont le désavantage de ne pouvoir se visiter qu'en uniforme.

these museums military have the disadvantage of NEG to-be-able SE to-visit only in uniform

"These military museums have the disadvantage of only allowing visitation by people in uniform."

(19) a. Visto che questi dimostranti sono così odiati come male armati, avranno il vantaggio di potersi disperdere per soddisfare un elettorato avido di ordine e di sicurezza.

seen that these demonstrators are as hated as poorly armed will-have the advantage of to-be-able-SI to-disperse for to-satisfy an electorate eager of order and of security

"Given that these demonstrators are as hated as they are poorly armed, they'll have the advantage of being able to be dispersed so as to satisfy an electorate that is eager for order and security."

b. I contratti preparati dal signor Leblanc hanno la reputazione di doversi leggere attentamente.

the contracts prepared by-the Mister Leblanc have the reputation of to-require-SI to-read carefully

"Contracts drawn up by Mr. Leblanc have the reputation of having to be read carefully."

c. Questi musei militari hanno lo svantaggio di non potersi visitare che in divisa.

these museums military have the disadvantage of NEG to-be-able-SI to-visit only in uniform

"These military museums have the disadvantage of only allowing visitation by people in uniform."

(20) a. Dado que los manifestantes son tan despreciados como están mal armados, tendrán la ventaja de poder dispersarse para satisfacer a un electorado ávido de orden y seguridad.

given that the demonstrators are as hated as are poorly armed will-have the advantage of to-be-able to-disperse-SE in-order-to to-satisfy to an electorate eager for order and security

"Given that these demonstrators are as hated as they are poorly armed, they'll have the advantage of being able to be dispersed so as to satisfy an electorate that is eager for order and security."

b. Dado que estos manifestantes son tan despreciados como están mal armados, tendrán la ventaja de poder dispersarse con entusiasmo.

given that these demonstrators are as hated as are poorly armed will-have the advantage of to-be-able to-disperse-SE with enthusiasm

"Given that these demonstrators are as hated as they are poorly armed, they'll have the advantage of being able to be enthusiastically dispersed."

c. Estos museos militares tienen la desventaja de no poderse visitar más que de uniforme.

these museums military have the disadvantage of NEG to-be-able-SE to-visit more than of uniform

"These military museums have the disadvantage of only allowing visitation by people in uniform."

The grammaticality of (18a,c)-(20a,c) above indicates that Romance middles do pass the first three tests for a syntactically active argument (and incidentally that Roberts was correct in his original contention that a middle reading is also available in tensed contexts like (15)-(17).)[5] Furthermore, the Canadian French and Madrid Spanish data in (4)-(6) show that the fourth criterion is also met, thereby providing the final piece of evidence against the

structures put forth in Williams (1981), Wehrli (1986), Cinque (1988), and Fellbaum and Zribi-Hertz (1989).

4. *In Favor of an Explicit External Argument in Romance Middles*

In the last section, four pieces of evidence were advanced against the structures in (7a,b). However, this still leaves two options available: the explicit argument approach advocated in Belletti (1982) and Roberts (1987), which is illustrated in (8a), and the implicit argument approach put forth in Chomsky (1981) and Keyser and Roeper (1984), given in (8b). Both types of analyses are compatible with the facts presented in section 3 since the four tests can only distinguish between syntactically present and syntactically absent external arguments. That is, implicit and explicit external arguments behave in an identical fashion with respect to these tests. The question that remains then is the following: which of the two structures in (8a,b) is the correct one?

Fortunately, there is one test which will allow us to make a choice. Jaeggli (1986a:616-617) has argued that there are two types of Control: argument Control and thematic Control. Thematic Control is possible for implicit arguments, while argument Control is only possible from an argument position. On the basis of the contrast between (21a,b) below, Jaeggli (1986a:616-617) has suggested that Control into passive infinitival clauses is an instance of argument Control. That is, he has suggested that only in (21a) is there an explicit argument (John) which can (argument) control the PRO; the English passive morpheme, being an implicit argument, is unable to do so.[6]

(21) a. John wants PRO to be loved by everyone.

b. *The structure of DNA was investigated PRO to be awarded the Nobel Prize.

In sum, Control into a passive infinitival is sensitive to the explicit or implicit nature of the external argument. Therefore, it should be possible to use these structures as a test for the implicit/explicit status of the external argument in middle sentences. To the best

of our knowledge, it has remained unnoticed that Romance middles do allow Control into passive infinitivals, indicating that they do contain an explicit external argument.

(22) De tels mensonges se racontent parfois pour PRO être admiré par les gens.
some such lies SE tell sometimes to to-be admired by the people
"One will sometimes tell such lies in order to gain people's admiration."

(23) Tali mensogne si raccontano spesso per essere ammirati dalla gente.
such lies SI tell often in-order-to to-be admired by-the people
"Such lies are often told in order to gain people's admiration."

(24) Esas mentiras se cuentan á veces para ser admirado.
those lies SE tell at times in-order-to to-be admired
"One will sometimes tell such lies in order to gain people's admiration."

To summarize the discussion thus far, we have argued that all Romance middle constructions contain an explicit argument internal to VP, i.e. a structure like the one in (8a) which is due to Roberts (1987). In the next and final section, we will return to the question of how one may account for the micro-parametric differences which do exist between the various varieties of Romance. As we will show, these differences will require two modifications of Roberts' original proposal.

5. *A Micro-Parametric Account of Romance Middles*

As was mentioned at the outset of this discussion, previous research on middle constructions was based on the assumption that by-phrases were universally disallowed in these sentences. For this reason, researchers incorporated into their analyses features whose function was to rule out such clauses. Since the preceding discussion has shown that by-phrases are in fact licit in certain varieties of Canadian French and Continental Spanish, these mechanisms must now be modified.

Belletti and Roberts ruled out by-phrases in Romance middles in two different ways, as the following lexical entries make clear.

(25) Romance Middle SE/SI: Belletti (1982:5)

Assignment: θ-External; No pro

Absorption: ACC

C-selection: -

(26) Romance Middle SE/SI: Roberts (1987:273)

Assignment: θ-External; Obligatorily forms a θ-chain with pro

Absorption: ACC

C-selection: -

As indicated in (25), Belletti proposed that the middle morpheme was directly assigned, that is, it did not simply absorb, the external theta-role. Since the middle morpheme was itself an argument, it could not c-select another category such as a by-phrase because the DP in that by-phrase would remain untheta-marked, in violation of the Theta-Criterion/Visibility Condition. Roberts took a different approach. As his entry in (26) makes clear, he also assumed that the middle morpheme was assigned the external theta-role, however, he made the additional assumption that this morpheme obligatorily formed a θ-chain with a pro in normal subject position which at that time was Spec of IP. This pro was then hypothesized to move to post-verbal position in order to allow the thematic object to move to Spec of IP to receive Nominative Case. (See the tree in (8a) above.) The effect of this was, once again, to prevent the middle morpheme from c-selecting any other category (such as a by-phrase) since any argument in that phrase would fail to receive a θ-role, and hence would violate the Theta-Criterion/Visibility Condition. From this brief summary, we can conclude that in order to rule out or to rule in by-phrases, one need only alter the thematic and c-selection properties of the middle morpheme. We will, therefore, replace the entries given above in (25) and (26) with those in (27a) and (27b) below. The entry in (27a) is the one which is relevant to those dialects of Canadian French and Madrid Spanish which allow sentences like (4)-(6) above. As the entry makes clear, we are assuming, following Belletti and Roberts, that this morpheme is an Accusative Case

absorber; we differ from both of them in proposing that middle SE absorbs the external theta-role and c-selects either a by-phrase or a "bare" DP. The entry in (27b) applies to the remaining dialects of Romance. Again, we follow Belletti and Roberts with respect to the Accusative Case absorption properties of middle SE/SI, but we differ from them in assuming that this morpheme is also an external theta-role absorber and that it c-selects only a "bare" DP.

(27) a. Canadian French/Madrid Spanish Middle SE

Absorption: θ-External

ACC

C-selection: __(by) DP

b. Remaining dialects' Middle SE/SI

Absorption: θ-External

ACC

C-selection: __DP

The functioning of these entries warrants some clarification. The by-phrase option in (27a) allows for the data in (4)-(6) in a manner parallel to the passive morpheme under Jaeggli's (1986a) analysis of that construction. In particular, Jaeggli (1986a) proposed that the passive -EN morpheme absorbs the external theta-role of the predicate, as well as the verb's Accusative Case feature, just as we've proposed for Romance middle SE. Furthermore, when the by-phrase c-selection frame is selected, the DP in that phrase receives its Case feature from the preposition by and its theta-role from the middle/passive morpheme via theta-role transmission. This is not to say, however, that our entry for the Romance middle morpheme is identical to that of the passive morpheme. Unlike Jaeggli (1986a), we are assuming that the middle morpheme in Canadian French and Madrid Spanish can also c-select a "bare" DP. It is important to note that when this option is used, the DP that appears in this position will remain Caseless as a consequence of the Accusative Case absorption properties of middle SE/SI. Therefore, one will only find in this position a

non-phonetic subject DP, in particular pro. (We are following Jaeggli 1986b, Roberge 1986,1990 and Authier's 1988,1992a analyses of pro as a Caseless empty category.) Thus, the entry in (27a) accounts not only for the acceptability of by-phrases in these dialects, but also for the fact that the understood subject can only be phonetically realized when an overt by is present to Case-mark it.

Turning now to the entry for the other dialects of Romance given in (27b), these dialects only subcategorize only for a DP, which, for the Case reasons discussed in the preceding paragraph, will always be realized as pro. Thus, in these dialects, no by-phrases will be allowed.

At this point, we have now accounted for the full range by-phrase facts. All that remains are the genericity data. In particular, we still must explain how the lexical entries in (27a) and (27b) also account for the fact that certain dialects of the Romance languages allow non-generic middles while others do not.

We would like to suggest that these facts are also linked to the Case absorption properties of the middle morpheme. We mentioned that the Case absorption properties of this morpheme have the effect of allowing only a Caseless DP, pro, to appear in middles without a by-phrase. Authier (1988, 1992a,b) has argued that such a pro could, a priori, only be identified in one of two ways. It could either be identified by the agreement features on the closest X^0 category which heads an XP in which it is contained, (in this case, that would be the middle morpheme in Agr-S) or the pro could, theoretically, be identified by virtue of being bound by an unselective operator in the sense of Lewis (1975).

In the case of Romance middles, we would like to argue that the first option is not available because the middle morpheme agrees with verb which itself is already well-known to agree in person, number, and gender with the internal argument in surface subject position, rather than with the pro bearing the external theta-role. (This agreement phenomenon has been illustrated throughout the text. See, for example, the sentences in (1a,c) in which the verb and middle SE/SI agree with the thematic object.) As further

evidence for this contention, consider the fact that in French it is possible to construct middle sentences in which the thematic object is in the first or second person, rather than the third person. As one would expect, the middle morpheme, like the verb, agrees in person, number, and gender with the thematic object.[7]

(28) a. On dit que je me lis bien.
one says that I SE-1st person-Sing read well
"They say that my work reads well."
(attributed to Richard Kayne by Osvaldo Jaeggli in his 1987 USC course lectures)

b. (Talking to one's car) Tu te pilotes bien, ma vieille.
you SE-2nd-person-Sing drive well, my old-one
"You sure drive well, baby."

Since the pro cannot be identified by the middle morpheme, the grammar must resort to the second option, identification by an unselective operator. This is what we believe is the key to explaining the genericity facts. In particular, Lewis (1975:7) has pointed out that the semantics of unselective operators (that is, overt and non-overt adverbs of quantification like usually, sometimes, and never) is such that they require quantification over cases, where cases are comprised of either a large number of events or a large number of stretches of time. For example, in order to truthfully say that a state of affairs usually, sometimes, or never obtains one must verify over a large number of events. We are suggesting that this semantic feature of unselective operators is also what is responsible for the genericity restriction one finds in middles without by-phrases. That is, we have proposed that when the middle morpheme c-selects a DP, it must, for Case reasons must be a pro. Given that the middle morpheme and verb agree with the thematic object, this pro can only be identified by virtue of being bound by an unselective operator, the semantics of which requires verification over a large number of events or stretches of time- that is, genericity.

It is interesting to note that this type of c-selection/pro approach to genericity raises a theoretical possibility which has not yet been attested, at least not with certainty. Namely,

middle SE/SI could, in some dialect, be associated with the same subcategorization frame as the passive morpheme under Jaeggli's (1986a) analysis. (I.e., it would absorb both Accusative Case and the External theta-role, but c-select only an optional by-phrase.[8]) In such a dialect, the middle construction would allow optional by-phrases, but there would be no generic constraint when such phrases are absent. Initially, the variety of Madrid Spanish exemplified in (6b) above appears to be just such a dialect since examples like Ayer a las ocho esas promesas se hicieron. "Yesterday at 8:00, these promises were made." are grammatical. However, this evidence is not yet conclusive since the grammaticality of such examples could, under Cinque's (1988) approach, actually be attributable to the impersonal argument reading.

In conclusion, in this paper we have introduced novel micro-parametric data which have allowed us to argue for three things. First, we have argued that Romance middles are associated with a structure very similar to the one given in (8a), the only structural difference being that the pro internal to VP is base-generated in that position, i.e., it does not move there from Spec of IP as Roberts (1987) proposed. Second, we have shown that Romance middles are associated with the lexical entries in (27a,b) since only these entries permit the range of micro-parametric variation we have found. Finally, the novel data we have introduced proves that two alleged defining characteristics of the middle construction are not really defining characteristics of it at all. Instead we have suggested that these two properties, which are true of middle constructions in the majority of Romance dialects, are actually mere side effects of subcategorization, coupled with the identification conditions on pro.[9]

NOTES

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1 As Belletti (1982) and Cinque (1988) have pointed out, in Spanish and Italian the SI/SE morpheme is ambiguous between a middle and impersonal reading. As a consequence, Italian and Spanish examples which are superficially parallel to (2b) are judged to be acceptable. For this reason it is only possible to straightforwardly illustrate the generic constraint in Continental French, as we have done in the text.

2 Certain authors, on the basis of two types of data, have pre-dated our contention that genericity is not a defining characteristic of the middle construction. However, these data have also been argued, in our view correctly, to be only apparent counterexamples. The first type of "problematic" example is noted in Ruwet (1972:89,95), Zribi-Hertz (1982:349), Zubizarreta (1987:150), and Lyons (1989:177), among others and it involves a middle SE/SI in what seems to be a non-generic sentence, as in (ia) below, taken from Zribi-Hertz (1982:349). Ruwet (1972:95), Fellbaum (1986:4), and Lyons (1989:178) dismiss this type of example because it actually involves a non-punctual use of a tense, one entirely compatible with the type of genericity assumed to be required by middles (i.e. the requirement that at some future time, any potential agent will be able to perform the action in question). As evidence, Ruwet notes that if one adds a punctual adverb to select a truly eventive reading, the sentence becomes ungrammatical, as in (ib).

(i) a. Ce roman se lira bientôt à Moscou.

this novel se will-read soon in Moscow

"This novel will soon be read in Moscow."

b. *Demain à huit heures et quart, ce roman se lira à Moscou.

tomorrow at eight hours and fifteen this novel se will-read in Moscow

"Tomorrow at 8:15, this novel will be read in Moscow."

Sentences (iia) and (iib), taken from Zubizarreta (1987:150) and Cinque (1988:542) respectively, illustrate the second type of alleged counterexample. These involve punctual uses of the verb tense and are clearly non-generic. However, these data have also been challenged: Lyons (1989:179), extending earlier insights based on English in Keyser & Roeper (1984:394), has suggested that examples like (iia) may actually involve a neuter use of SE, while Cinque (1988:542) has argued that examples like (iib) involve an impersonal use of SI. The fact that examples like (iib) are ungrammatical in French, a language which lacks a productive impersonal use of SE, supports Cinque's contention. Data supporting Lyons' suggestion can be found in footnote 5.

(ii) a. La question est en train de se discuter dans la salle du conseil.

the question is in process of se to-discuss in the hall of counsel

"This question is now being discussed at the council hall."

b. Oggi, a Beirut, si è ucciso un innocente.

today in Beirut SI is killed an innocent

"Today in Beirut they killed an innocent man."

3 Although we have tested only Spanish, French, and Italian, Cinque's (1988: 571-574) discussion of the other Romance languages indicates that our proposals may be extended to the other Romance languages, with the possible exception of the Trentino dialect of Italian which Zubizarreta (1982: 150ff.) reports lacks the middle SI construction.

4 Chomsky (1986:121), Jaeggli (1986a:614) and Roberts (1987:87) originally proposed that the external theta-role absorbed by the passive morpheme could not function as an object of predication in order to account for contrasts like the following:

(i) A soldier visited the museum in uniform.

(ii) The museum was visited *(by a soldier) in uniform.

There are, however, examples like (iii)-(v) below, taken from Stroik (1992: 132, ft.7), which may counterexemplify this claim. Chomsky (1986:211, ft.61) cites Roeper (1984) for similar examples and he credits Luigi Rizzi for the suggestion that the contrast between examples like (i)-(ii) and (iii)-(v) may be due to the adverbial, as opposed to adjectival, nature of the latter type of sentence. If this suggestion is correct, then examples like (iii)-(v) should be viewed as further instances of the Agent-Oriented adverb test.

(iii) This bank-job wasn't done alone.

(iv) I can tell that this letter was written in a good mood.

(v) That painting was painted blindfolded.

5 The application of these tests to the class of apparent counterexamples mentioned above in footnote 2 supports Lyons' (1989:178) contention that these are neuter uses of the SE morpheme.

(i) a. ?*La question est en train de se discuter dans la salle du conseil pour faire peur au gouvernement fédéral.

the question is in process of SE to-discuss in the hall of-the council in-order-to make fear to-the government federal

"The question is now being discussed in the council hall in order to alarm the federal government."

(i) b. *La question est en train de se discuter dans la salle du conseil en hurlant.

the question is in process of SE to-discuss in the hall of-the council by yelling

"The question is now being loudly discussed in the council hall."

c. *La question est en train de se discuter en uniforme au Q.G. du bataillon.

the question is in process of SE to-discuss in uniform at-the Q.H. of-the batallion

"This question is now being discussed by people in uniform down at company headquarters."

6 Based on the judgments our Italian and Spanish informants have given us, it seems that passives in these languages unlike their English and French counterparts, actually allow Control into passive infinitivals, as the contrast between the examples in (i) and (ii) below indicates.

(i) a. *These lies were told PRO to be admired by others.

b. *Ces mensonges ont été racontés pour PRO être admiré par les gens.

these lies have been told to to-be admired by the people

(ii) a. Ieri, alle due, queste mensogne sono state raccontate per essere ammirati dalla gente.

yesterday at-the 2:00 these lies are been told in-order-to to-be admired by-the people

"Yesterday at 2:00, these lies were told in order to gain people's admiration."

b. Ayer a las ocho esas mentiras fueron contadas para ser admirado.

yesterday at the 8:00 those lies were told for to-be admired

"Yesterday at 8:00, these lies were told in order to gain people's admiration."

In sum, it appears that Romance passive constructions are not all identical in this respect, as Jaeggli (1986a) had assumed. In particular, the grammaticality of sentences like (ii) above indicates that passives in these languages actually do contain an explicit external argument.

7 For reasons that are unclear to us, our Italian and Spanish informants disallow middles in the first and second persons, as indicated by the grammaticality contrast between the French examples in (28a,b) in the text and their Italian and Spanish counterparts given below:

(i) a. ?*Dicono che mi leggo bene.
say that SE-1st person-Sing read well
"They say that I (my work) read well."

b. (Talking to one's car) ?*Tu ti guidi bene, vecchia mia.
you SE-2nd-person-Sing drive well, old-one mine
"You sure drive well, baby."

(ii) a. *Dicen que me leo bien.
say that SE-1st person-Sing read well
"They say that I (my work) read well."

b. (Talking to one's car) *Tu te conduces bien.
you SE-2nd-person-Sing drive well
"You sure drive well!"

8 But see the Italian and Spanish data in footnote 6 which indicate that Jaeggli's (1986a) analysis of Romance passives may be in need of further refinement.

9 The reader may wonder whether the present proposals could be extended to cover languages outside the Romance family, in particular, English. Such an approach is certainly feasible, and the fact that English middle constructions, like the majority of their Continental Romance counterparts, exhibit a genericity constraint and disallow by-phrases initially suggests that such a position may be desirable. That is, one could analyze English middles as

containing a non-overt SE/SI (an idea originally put forth by Keyser & Roeper) and associate this morpheme with the subcategorization frame given in (27b). Alternatively, one could adopt Stroik's (1992) proposal in which the empty category bearing the external θ-role is PRO, which, as Authier (1988) has shown, can be unselectively bound in a manner parallel to pro. Under either approach the aforementioned characteristics could be made to follow. We have not done so in the text simply because the middle facts in English are not as clear as they are in Romance. For example, it is well-known that middle formation is not as productive in English as it is in Romance. (The reader may verify this by translating the Romance middle sentences given in the text into their English counterparts.) Furthermore, Jaeggli (1986a:611) and Roberts (1987:189,190) have argued that the standard arguments in favor of a syntactically active external argument do not go through in English, and, indeed, our new argument regarding passive infinitivals also fails to go through in this language. (Cf. the grammaticality of (22)-(24) and *Bridges blow up easily to be awarded medals.) However, these considerations cannot yet be taken as conclusive evidence against the presence of a syntactically active external argument in English middles either since Stroik (1992) has offered independent evidence supporting an approach similar to the one we've put forth here for Romance, attributing the above-mentioned differences to external factors. Since we have no conclusive evidence to offer for or against either approach, we must leave this issue unresolved. (See Fellbaum 1986, Roberts 1987, Fagan 1988, and Massam 1992 for additional discussion of the mechanisms that may be at work in English middles.)

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